while the grass is closely cropped around them. It is nevertheless unavoidable, so common are these plants, that portions of them should be eaten very often by these animals. It is probable that small quantities of the less acrid sorts do them no injury. At least, it appears that their stomachs are much less susceptible to this kind of stimulus than ours. In the *Pan Suecus* some experiments upon these plants, with domestic animals, are detailed; in which, it is stated that, horned cattle refused to eat all the species when offered to them, except R. auricomus. This species was rejected by horses, while they would eat R. flammula. Sheep and goats eat the R. acris, one of the most pungent species. Dr. Pulteney states, as a well known fact, that hogs, in England, devour the roots of R. bulbosus. How it is that these animals resist the deleterious effects of so virulent plants, it is not easy to say. It is, however, a not more remarkable fact, than the power of some animals to devour Cantharides and even mineral poisons with impunity.*

In their dry state, various species of Ranunculus enter into the composition of hay, particularly R. acris. Having lost their acrimony altogether in drying, they are harmless and probably nutritive.

* See a note, vol. i. p. 164.

Dr. Pulteney has published a memoir in the Linnæan transactions on the economical use of some of the Ranunculi, particularly the R. fluviatilis, which he considers a variety of R. aquatilis. Contrary to the common effects of the other species, this plant is said, by him, to be not only innocent, but highly nutritive to cattle. He states that, "in the neighbourhood of Ringwood, on the borders of the Avon, which affords this vegetable in great abundance all the year, some of the cottagers sustain their cows, and even horses, almost wholly upon this plant; since the remaining part of their food is nothing more than a scanty pittance, they get on the adjacent heath, which affords little more than Ling, Lichen, Bog-moss or Sphagnum, &c. It is usual to employ a man to collect a quantity for the day every morning, and bring it in the boat to the edge of the water, from which the cows, in the instance seen, stood eating it with great avidity. I was indeed informed," says he, "they relished it so highly, that it was unsafe to allow them more than a certain quantity; I think between twenty five and thirty pounds daily, each; but with variation according to circumstances. The cows I saw were apparently not in a mean condition, and gave a sufficient quantity of good milk. I

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